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## **2022 U7 Mayors Declaration 3 May 2022**

### **Embracing the Urban World:**

## **Cities, Urbanization and Multilevel Cooperation as Drivers of Change for Peace, Democracy and Sustainability**

### **Introduction**

We, Mayors gathered through the networks of local governments of G7 nations and the European Union, welcome the unprecedented recognition of cities, sustainable urban development and multilevel governance in the 2022 G7 Presidency Programme as a historic opportunity to embrace peace, democracy and sustainability. This recognition reflects major progress in the engagement of local governments in the G7 process, which began in 2016 with the Environment Ministers and Mayors Forum and reached a new level with the creation of Urban7 (U7) in 2021. Now, the U7 Group invites G7 countries and all G7 engagement groups to recognize the U7 as a new G7 Engagement Group from 2022 onwards, to strengthen multilevel and multistakeholder cooperation globally.

The G7 is united by common values, including the rule of law, human rights, popular sovereignty and freedom of expression. G7 countries are expected to demonstrate decisive and essential leadership for ambitious global action towards sustainability and climate protection, in accordance with their historical responsibilities as well as technical and financial capabilities.

Global sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace and democracy. The Russian war in Ukraine provides us with a painful reminder that people cannot build a future where war reigns. We condemn this attack against Ukraine, which breaks the principles of territorial integrity and international law. It has caused the loss of human lives and suffering for innocent families, especially children, in Ukraine. The war will also have

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severe negative impacts on the lives of people in Russia, surrounding countries, and indeed globally. These catastrophic impacts will not end with the war. Therefore, we stand ready to offer our support to sustainably rebuild the urban infrastructure and civil society in Ukraine in partnership with the G7 governments.

Around the world, democracy is being questioned and challenged by populist and autocratic governments. It is often cities, with their diverse urban societies, elected mayors and other subnational leaders, who are most capable of working to strengthen and preserve democracy.

Many of the greatest challenges faced in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are too complex for nation states to solve alone. Local governments are the level of democratic leadership closest to the people, with responsibility for creating sustainable, prosperous places to live and work. Our cities foster innovation, welcome collaboration and active participation of citizens, civil society, scientists and entrepreneurs, to create a sustainable planet through integrated urban development. Cities also work together as networks, with thousands of local governments supporting each other in implementing the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Climate Agreement and other global agreements, by adopting ambitious commitments and striving for transformative emergency actions through innovative solutions. Cities and nation states must therefore collaborate closely to deliver these solutions, and the U7 offers an important route to delivering such results at the global level.

This is why cities, Mayors and other subnational leaders are at the center of efforts to implement the SDGs locally, fight the climate emergency, transition to sustainable energy, protect biodiversity, restore ecosystems, as well as embrace a circular economy by minimizing waste, pollution and resource extraction. Mayors are also working tirelessly to reduce poverty, remove gender, social and intergenerational inequalities, manage sustainable procurement through public finances, guarantee local public service provision, ensure sustainable food security, protect health, ensure a just transition, and promote peace and solidarity, including safe and orderly migration.

The U7 Group calls for a change in perspective: Too often, national policymakers view cities as objects of their policies and programmes. However, the transformative power of cities for the common good can only be harnessed if the global political system evolves into true

multilevel governance. In such a system, cities are not primarily an administrative level of implementation, but a political level that develops and decides on policy programming on an equal footing. Urban diplomacy - i.e. international cooperation between cities or the participation of cities in international decision-making mechanisms - holds considerable potential for achieving the goals of the G7 and the global multilateral system.

**We, the leaders of U7 share our views on the themes addressed by 2022 G7 Presidency Programme:**

On SUSTAINABLE PLANET: We welcome the proposal for an international climate club, as well as the recognition of integrated sustainable urban development and investment in resilient infrastructure. We encourage this initiative to engage local governments as crucial partners to ensure full delivery and financing of commitments and action on mitigation, including transition to and security of sustainable energy, adaptation, loss and damage, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation.

On ECONOMIC STABILITY: We welcome the Programme's reference to harnessing the transformative power of cities and highlight the importance of arts, culture and the creative economy. We underline that the cooperation of local governments is necessary to realize the economic resilience and inclusive economic growth potential of the G7 countries.

On HEALTHY LIVES: We invite the G7 to recognize the role of local and regional governments in addressing indoor and outdoor air quality, waste management, safe water supply and noise pollution, as well as in responding to pandemics and other health emergencies.

On INVESTMENT IN A BETTER FUTURE: We welcome the reference to the transformative power of cities and municipalities. We are therefore ready to actively engage in the planned initiatives and highlight local public service provision (health, education, water, etc.) as the backbone to the localization of the SDGs. We invite G7 countries to support investments in local and subnational governments, such as guaranteeing that they receive their fair share in the relevant national budgets, improved public-private and innovative finance

and taxation arrangements, respecting the principals of subsidiarity, so that strategic investments follow locally developed strategies, plans and priorities.

On STRONGER TOGETHER: We welcome the recognition of major challenges municipalities face and underline that voting rights and gender equity is not simply a matter of "girls education," but must be a full embracement of bodily autonomy, gender inclusivity. It must also be an essential element of representative and diverse government, including women's empowerment and more women in leadership positions, to ensure no one and no place left behind.

### **As concrete commitments and calls to action, the U7 Group;**

1. Invites G7 countries and all G7 engagement groups to recognize the U7 as a new G7 Engagement Group from 2022 onwards, to strengthen multilevel and multistakeholder cooperation globally.
2. Commits to engage in G7 ministerial meetings, including foreign affairs, development, finance, environment, health and culture. The group especially welcomes the first meeting of the ministers of sustainable urban development, which will cooperate with the cities.
3. Invites G7 countries to systematically consider and promote the potential of urban diplomacy in their foreign and development policies.
4. Invites G7 countries to embrace local self-government as a pathway for development and advance multilevel cooperation as an indispensable element of global sustainability governance, and as part of inclusive multilateralism under the UN.
5. Urges all G7 countries to demonstrate leadership in multilevel cooperation by effective engagement of local and regional governments, in order to;
  - a. Escalate into "emergency mode of action" by presenting Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) compatible/or sufficient for the Paris Agreement by Climate COP27,
  - b. Support implementation of the second 10-Year Plan of Action on Subnational governments, cities and other local authorities for biodiversity (2021-2030) and adopt ambitious 2030 and 2050 commitments at the Biodiversity COP15, as well as at the Desertification COP15,

c. Support the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and preparation of Voluntary Local Reviews and enhance their incorporation into National Voluntary Reviews in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals to be reported at the High Level Political Forum

d. Honor the International Migration Review Forum, Stockholm+50 and HABITATIII follow-up processes, among others.

6. Invites G7 countries to facilitate debt relief, support equitable access to vaccines and accelerate sustainability investments globally.

7. Invites G7 countries to:

a. significantly increase national budgets supporting municipal investments, while providing additional freedoms for and enlarging the scope of local authorities' own financial means; and

b. significantly increase the share of integrated sustainable urban development within Official Development Assistance (ODA) and climate funds to enhance action on planning, buildings, mobility, nature, renewable energy, waste and procurement, among others, and support efforts to enhance direct access to funding programme for cities, as a concrete demonstration to advance cooperation, in particular with the Global South.

8. Commits to supporting global solidarity, multilateralism and action by establishing strong collaboration with the U20, as the engagement mechanism of local governments in the G20 process.

9. Commends all cities in Europe and globally that demonstrate solidarity and support for local governments in Ukraine, and Invites G7 Heads of State and relevant Ministers, in collaboration with the U7 Group, to jointly establish a post-war development strategy for Ukraine to redevelop and rebuild the damaged infrastructure and cities sustainably.

10. Commits to providing additional inputs to 2022 G7 Heads of State Summit on 26-28 June 2022, taking into account the outcomes and overall response through the May-June G7 meetings of ministers and welcomes all feedbacks and contributions to support the delivery of commitments and actions listed in this Declaration.